

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO**

United States of America,  
Plaintiff,  
V.  
Two Rural Lots, etc.,  
Defendants.

**CASE NUMBER: 98-1813 (HL)**

**MOTION**

**Date Filed:** 4/17/00      **Docket #** 18      ☒ **Plffs**   ☐ **Defts**  
**Title:** Motion for Habeas Corpus  
**Opp'n Filed:**      **Docket #**

**ORDER**

Denied. Claimant Victor Manuel Valle Lasalle seems to argue that he did not receive notice of the civil proceedings against the Defendant properties in this case. The record clearly shows that adequate notice was given in the form of personal service of process, process mailed to him at MDC Guaynabo, and service by publication. Because Claimant Valle failed to respond in any way, he was entered into default.

Claimant Valle further seems to argue that the United States' legal system does not allow a person to be punished until he is found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt by a jury of his peers. He is correct. Claimant Valle fails to understand, however, the nature of both a civil forfeiture and a default judgment. A civil forfeiture is a proceeding against property, not against its owner. Further, the standard of proof is a mere preponderance of the evidence. Finally, a default judgment in a civil action is a fully valid judgment.

Accordingly, Claimant Valle's motion is hereby denied.

Date

4/27/00

**HECTOR M. LAFFITTE**  
Chief U.S. District Judge

(3)

s/c  
V. Manuel Valle  
4/27/00

(19)

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